

MILITARY

Helwan HA-300

In the early 1960s Egypt started an ambitious project to develop and produce a supersonic fighter, with Spanish assistance. The famous German aeronautical engineer Willi Messerschmitt was responsible for the project. The most famous jet of World War II was the Messerschmitt ME-262A. It could have possibly changed the outcome of the war if it had come a little earlier and in greater numbers. Fourteen hundred of these twin-engine German jets were produced during the war, but only about 100 ever saw operation as fighters. An additional 200 were used as tactical fighter bombers.



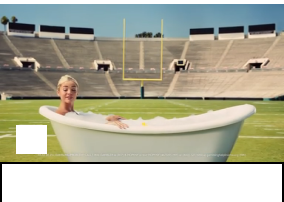
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Messerschmitt's team designed a lightweight supersonic fighter designated as HA-300P. By mid 1956, there were contacts between Hispano Aviacion and the Egyptian government led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. They led to the purchase of the Spanish license constructed Me 109 as well as the cloning of HA 200. The interest of Egypt awakened Spain's hopes in finding a partner that would help divide the development costs of the HA. During these negotiations, Egypt had made it clear that the initial flight of the HA 300 was the prerequisite for the contract of the licensed construction.



In 1961, the Egyptian government purchased the license to develop the HA 300.



For the HA 300, the Hispano Aviacion refunded all of the development costs. In return, the Egyptian government provided its support to the project, the entire Messerschmitt team. The HA 300 P were overtaken by the HA 300. The first HA 300 P was delivered to Cairo. During 1965, the second prototype was built. For the third prototype, the Orpheus



Willy Messerschmitt was asked to develop his own engine. Though he was no engine constructor, he found help from Ferdinand Brandner. The Jumo 222 was developed and was the strongest German aircraft engine of the Second World War. Brandner later went to the Soviet Union where he developed the stronger propeller turbine jet air engine in the world, the Kuznetsov NK-12M with 8,800 kW. The Austrian jet engine expert Ferdinand Brandner was invited to develop a new turbojet for the new fighter. Test facilities and workshops for the new fighter and engine were built at Helwan / Hulwan airbase, southeast of Cairo. The newly built E-300 jet engine ran for the first time in July 1963, while the HA-300 first prototype made its first flight on 7 March 1964.



The turbo jet engine E300 with 33.3 kN thrust suggested by Brandner and the 49 nK with afterburn was not just expected from the HA 300, but also for the fighter HF 24 Marut which Kurt Tank had been developing for the Indian government. A corresponding contract between India and Egypt was signed in September 1964. India helped fund development of the E-300 engine in order to acquire a new power plant for its HF-24 Marut jet fighter. The E-300 engine was eventually used in the Indian HF-24 Marut fighter. Two Egyptian pilots went to India in 1964 and attended the Indian air force test pilot school to prepare for the HA-300 flight development. India also provided a Marut fighter for the E-300 project.

The cell of the HA 300 had to be altered for the new engine. Problems concerning the procurement of construction parts delayed the project. After the outbreak of the Six Day War in 1967, Messerschmitt and Tank had contracts for the development of a third prototype of the HA 300.

After the 1967 defeat, continuous Soviet pressure sought to stop the project. Due to financial problems and the availability of large numbers of Soviet fighters, the Egyptian government cancelled the project in 1969 when the third prototype with the E-300 had started taxi testing. In 1969, the development was aborted and the German engineers had to evacuate the country due to tensions with the Federal Republic of Germany which led to a standstill in work. Egypt made close contacts with the Soviet Union and purchased aircrafts instead of developing them itself. The HA 300 program cost the Egyptian government more than 135 million Egyptian pounds.

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